

# About the Challenge Cost Share Program

## National Park Service National Trails Intermountain Region

The Challenge Cost Share Program (CCSP) provides matching money for a broad range of projects that investigate, document, protect, and/or promote public understanding and appreciation of National Historic Trails. To be eligible for CCSP support from National Trails Intermountain Region (NTIR), a project proposal must be related to the trails administered through this office:

California National Historic Trail  
El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail  
El Camino Real de los Tejas National Historic Trail  
Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail  
Old Spanish National Historic Trail  
Oregon National Historic Trail  
Pony Express National Historic Trail  
Santa Fe National Historic Trail  
Trail of Tears National Historic Trail

### *What Does CCSP Do?*

The Challenge Cost Share Program is a partnership-and-matching program for projects related to National Historic Trails administered by the National Park Service (NPS). Through CCSP, the NPS can pay as much as half of a project's costs, up to a total of **\$20,000**. The successful project proposal must match CCSP money with non-federal dollars and/or by donated in-kind labor, services, and materials.

### *What Kinds of Projects are Eligible?*

CCSP project proposals must meet the needs of congressionally authorized National Historic Trails. Broadly, those needs include field research, archival and oral history research, protection and restoration of trail resources, and promotion of public understanding and appreciation of National Historic Trails.

In addition, CCSP projects must be true partnerships that include **substantial involvement** by the NPS — more than just providing funding, reviews, and technical advice “as needed.” Rather, the NPS **must be a full, active partner with shared responsibility** for project management, control, direction, and performance. Examples of substantial involvement include participating in selection of project staff or trainees, in project design or planning, in development of wayside exhibits and publications, in fieldwork, in the collection and/or analysis of data, and in presentation of results in publications. Our staff can help identify appropriate kinds of NPS involvement for your project.

Examples of substantial involvement (indicating the need for a cooperative agreement) include:

1. Agency and recipient collaboration or joint participation.
2. Substantial, direct, agency operational involvement or participation during the assisted activity is anticipated prior to award to ensure compliance with such statutory requirements as civil rights, environmental protection, and provision for the handicapped.
3. Highly prescriptive agency requirements prior to award that limit recipient discretion with respect to scope of services offered, organizational structure, staffing, mode of operation, and other management processes, coupled with close agency monitoring or operational involvement

during performance beyond the normal exercise of federal stewardship responsibilities to ensure compliance with these requirements.

4. NPS participation in the development of interpretive messages presented in various interpretive media (videos, waysides, brochures, etc.) being undertaken by cooperators with funds provided in the cooperative agreement.

You are responsible for keeping accurate records, including timesheets and receipts that document your expenditures and in-kind match. These records must be kept for three years and may be subject to audit.

## ***Who Can Participate?***

You are eligible to request CCSP funding if:

1. you represent a non-profit organization, business, educational entity, or non-federal agency, and
2. you can match the CCSP money with non-federal dollars and/or in-kind donations, and
3. your project idea would benefit the public and any of the nine trails administered by this office, and
4. your organization is financially able to operate on a reimbursement basis. The NPS does not advance project money. Rather, partners must incur the expenses and then submit invoices, receipts, timesheets and volunteer work logs, and travel records to the NPS for reimbursement. The reimbursement process can take one to two months.

The project itself can involve any kind of property: federal (with the consent of the managing agency), state, local, commercial, or private. However, the project itself must benefit the trail and the public. CCSP funds cannot be used for strictly private or commercial benefit.

## ***How Do I Prepare My Proposal?***

Before filling out any forms, contact the **CCSP coordinator to discuss your ideas**. The coordinator can help you refine your proposal, offer technical and planning expertise, help identify opportunities for NPS substantial involvement, and provide budget guidance for developing a successful project proposal.

Next, fill out the **Challenge Cost Share Program Proposal Form** (Attachment A).

Then email your **draft** proposal and budget for initial review.

After working with the CCSP coordinator to finalize the details of your proposal, revise the form as needed. **Your final proposal will not be accepted without the signatures**. You may also include supplementary materials such as letters of support from other organizations. You must submit letters of consent from landowners.

## ***What Happens Next?***

If your project is approved, you will be asked to enter into a Cooperative Agreement with the National Park Service. The agreement states the terms of the partnership and legally authorizes our office to reimburse you for your allowable expenses. Once the agreement is authorized by the NPS and the Cooperative Agreement has been signed, you may begin your project. When your project is completed and/or your funding is spent, you will be asked to complete a short Project Completion form that closes the project.